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MATRIMONY MADE EASY.

The present is an age of true wonders, and for that reason it is likewise an age of impudent deceptions: it is an age of extraordinary knowledge, and therefore of marvellous ignorance: an age of daring scepticism, and consequently of blind credulity. Nothing is too difficult for ingenuity to accomplish; and hollow pretension may therefore go as far as it pleases. If the once famous seven-league boots toil after us in vain upon the road; if we in Edinburgh converse this evening with a friend in London, and, in compliance with his invitation, go and breakfast with him to-morrow morning in Piccadilly—why not trust in the ears that hear the grass grow, or in any of the other marvels of what, in the days of our youthful inexperience, we called romance? The true and the false are so much jumbled together, and resemble each other so closely, that it is no wonder we cannot tell the difference. If one professor of the healing art is able to amputate a limb without causing the slightest pain, are we to disbelieve another who pretends merely to dissolve a bunion on the foot for thirteenpence-halfpenny?

Although impossibilities, however, have become commonplace facts, and nothing remains ridiculous but ridicule, there are *some* pretensions which would puzzle a modern owl; and one of these we shall now take the liberty of examining, more especially since a brother contributor was disappointed on a former occasion in obtaining the advertised recipe.* We are not to be moved from the performance of this duty by the fact—although we mention it here as a matter of justice—that the professor in question (they are all professors) has liberally dropped the odd halfpenny, and charges no more than thirteenpence—which is twopence less than Sir John Falstaff's share in the robbery committed by Pistol. Giving him due credit for this moderation, we proceed to say that our professor's arcanum is described in the heading of his advertisement—

MATRIMONY MADE EASY, OR HOW TO WIN A LOVER;

and that this is no presuming title for an announcement which promises, for the moderate sum we have mentioned, 'plain directions to enable ladies or gentlemen to win the devoted affections of as many of the opposite sex as their hearts may desire.' It might be supposed that there is something Bluebeardish and unconscionable in this offer; but we must recollect that a recipe, if worth anything, does not lose its virtue for being once used. The same process which acts upon one set of devoted affections will of course serve for any number of scores or thousands that may be coveted by the liberal heart which has parted with thirteenpence for the purpose.

Of the process, we are told that it is perfectly simple, but captivating and enthralling to a remarkable degree. Under its influence anybody and everybody may be married 'irrespective of age, appearance, or position'—that is, however old, ugly, poor, or mean; they may be married too, if they so will, even to the most fickle or cold-hearted; 'and last, though not least,' the process may be gone through 'with such ease and delicacy that detection is impossible.' Setting the science of the thing aside, there can be nothing, we think, more finely poetical than this conception; and certainly nothing more consolatory to that sensitive timidity which shrinks from aiming at the love it would die to obtain. How many men there be, how many women, who carry with them through years a secret preference, which is the one fact in their history, and which is buried with them in their grave! If these men, if these women, could only come by such a thirteen-pennyworth! Many, too, feel an attraction that might seem magical for an utter stranger. They fancy they recognise features their eyes never looked upon in this world before; and they take refuge from the thrilling uncertainties that haunt them in the dream of a former state of existence which has transmitted its sympathies, and even its shadowy memories to the present. These anonymous phantoms have been alluded to by a poet, but more in their material than psychological character:—

> 'One of those forms that flit by us when we
> Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
> And oh! the loveliness at times we see,
> The momentary gliding, the soft grace,
> The youth, the bloom, the beauty, which agree
> In many a nameless being we retrace,
> Whose course and home we know not, nor shall know—
> Like the lost Pleiad, seen no more below!'

Now, if we could only follow such shapes to their sublunary abode—if we could only awaken in their bosom the sympathy that burns in ours—if we could only make the recognition mutual, and renew the intercommunion which has perhaps been suspended for a thousand years—would not that be worth thirteenpence?

But how to realise an object like this? Speak, dumb professor! and

> 'A round unvarnished tale deliver
> Of your whole course of love: what drugs, what charms,
> What conjuration, and what mighty magic'

you employ to bring about such admirable results! Or is it not more probable that our professor is a

* See 'A Last Breach of Confidence,' in No. 349.

philosopher who works upon the mind through its every-day feelings, and is only different from other men by the art with which he employs common agents to bring about a marvellous object? Is it not to him the father of Hermia speaks?—

'Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth!'

We feel, however, that we are perhaps trifling with hearts which cannot bear such rough handling—that we are sending through the entire community a thrill of expectation which it is our destiny to disappoint. Let us say, then, without tampering further with so delicate a subject, that the Professor of Matrimony is —— But stay: we shall first mention what he does. He does *not* furnish a love-powder, or a talisman, or a perfume, or a salve, or a potion, or a phial of vapour, or a sealed packet of electricity. All he gives for your money is two superficial inches of pamphlet, containing little more than one of our columns of letter-press; and worth, therefore, in vulgar money, the fractional part of a farthing. And in this pamphlet, we are ashamed to say, there is nothing mysterious, nothing magical, nothing even poetical. Here is a portion of the prologue:—'Generally speaking, both sexes are desirous of entering the matrimonial state; but, considering the hundreds of thousands who wear out a lonely and miserable existence as old maids and bachelors, it becomes quite evident that there is something wrong in the existing state of society which debars so many respectable persons from marital felicity; and the cause, as well as the remedy, for all these disappointments I undertake to point out. It appears to me that both ladies and gentlemen seal their own misery by an overdue deference to the cold formalities of society, and sacrifice their prospects of happiness, as well as usefulness, in a social point of view, at the shrine of etiquette.'

What, then, does the professor propose? That we should all ask one another without ceremony? That we should institute a perpetual leap year, available in its privileges both for men and women? No such thing: he offers to do all the courting himself for the entire bachelorhood and spinsterhood of the nation, and to manage the process in such a 'style of fascination' that 'none can resist its influence!' His theory is, that everybody wants to be married, and that nothing more is requisite than an introduction. This introduction he proposes to obtain by advertisement, if specially requested; but in most cases it will be unnecessary to have recourse to such an expedient, he having begun business with a very large stock of ladies and gentlemen on hand. From his omission, however, to say why he does not marry these ladies and gentlemen to one another, and likewise to declare, in an exposition which professes to be candour itself, by what means he proposes to procure husbands and wives for age, ugliness, poverty, and vulgarity of station, gives one a sort of qualm as he reads, and almost induces a suspicion that the professor is—saving your sentimentality—a humbug!

Beyond the advertisement, however, there is nothing new in the plan; and neither is there anything flagitious in it, if we except the 'captivating and enthralling' on false pretexts of an unlimited number of thirteenpences. A matrimonial agency is no novelty even in England. It is just such a scheme as would naturally present itself to the imaginations of a proud, reserved, and yet impassioned people; just such a scheme as would be fallen upon by them to soothe

'The nympholepsy of some fond despair;'

and yet just such a scheme as in practice they would turn from with a sensitive flush. Yes; a matrimonial agency is wanted, but it wont do in England: and the reason it wont do is, that it is wanted. The same pride and reserve that make it a desideratum in theory, are fatal to its success in experiment.

The case is different in France, and so are the social character and manners of the people. In good society there, when a love-match takes place at all, it is the result of some comparatively rare coincidence. The choice of the parents and that of the young people *happen* to coincide: and if it turned out otherwise, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the lady would yield to duty—which in this instance, as in numerous others, means custom. In the hundredth case—that of disobedience—the misconduct of the daughter would not only be looked upon by her acquaintances as unfilial, but indelicate; and it is not uncommon for a Frenchwoman to boast, that although, if left to her own inclinations, she would have made quite a different choice, still she had been too well brought up to refuse the happy man her friends recommended. In the midst of marriages like these, in which Love, however welcome he may be, merely drops in accidentally when he comes at all, it is not surprising to find the French Hymen opening a shop upon the Boulevards for providing husbands and wives to order. There is in Paris at least one great establishment of the kind, where candidates for matrimonial honours may compare their qualifications with those of numerous others of the opposite sex—all registered in a business-like way—and make their election accordingly. We do not know whether the agents perform their spiriting in such a 'style of fascination' that the result is always fortunate; but at anyrate, if disappointed in one quarter, the aspirant may have recourse to another; and at last, no doubt, a true adjustment of claims and qualifications takes place, and his perseverance is rewarded. The whole plan, in fact, is founded on the approximation to equality in the numbers of the two sexes, and on that sympathetic relationship between them which is declared in the philosophical saying—

FOR EVERY SILLY JOCKEY THERE IS AS SILLY A JENNY.

A matrimonial agency is likewise well adapted to the French character, from the remarkable gravity of the people. We do not speak at random. Gravity, or the power of keeping one's countenance, is a striking characteristic of the French. An Englishman is set into a roar by the thousand ordinary circumstances of life which a Frenchman views with imperturbable decorum. Compare, for instance, the inhuman ecstacies into which the former is thrown by the spectacle of an honest man chasing his hat on a windy day, with the placid satisfaction with which the latter looks on at the same escapade. Who does not feel that in London the matrimonial office would be surrounded by a crowd of curious spectators, who would hail the entrance and exit of supposed candidates with cheers, jibes, and laughter? In Paris—we speak by the card—that would be the least-noticed part of the street: the passers-by, even of the lowest classes, would refrain from turning their heads; and it would not be till they were some doors beyond that a silent twinkle of the eye, or at most a quiet smile, would show that they were not insensible to the associations of the spot. In London, again, the candidate would have a strong misgiving that he was doing something ridiculous. On reaching the agent's chancery with the name, he would, like the Accusing Spirit, blush as he gave it in; and he would fix his eyes with jealous scrutiny upon the Recording Angel as he wrote

it down, thinking that he must be laughing at him in his sleeve. This functionary, on his part, would betray his consciousness of the suspicion being only natural by the pains he would take to dispel it; and the result of the interview might possibly be, that the thirteenpence just within his grasp would be ravished away from it, himself playing to the end the part of the recorder of Uncle Toby's transgression, who 'dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.' In Paris there would be neither the suspicion nor the reality of ridicule. The fair customer would enter the marriage shop with that ineffable air of business which a Frenchwoman has in all her transactions; and having finished the affair for the time—receiving with graceful acknowledgments any complimentary politeness that might be elicited by the occasion—she would emerge into the street, looking round her with the aspect of one who has gone through a great duty with tact, judgment, and decision.

The success which is said to have attended our professor's speculation is not the success of a matrimonial agent, but merely of an advertising cheat. The credulity which could swallow so palpable a bait is, as we have remarked, a distinguishing characteristic of this age of wonders. The mysterious and unknown, which in our own time have given forth so many admirable things, are an inexhaustible mine for the charlatan and impostor. Very recently a gentleman, for the purpose of deciding a bet, inserted a single advertisement in the *Times*, offering, in return for half a guinea, to send the applicant a recipe for the cure of pimples and discolorations on the face. This single advertisement produced forty half guineas (which were handed to a medical charity), and the lucky patients received in return a formula from a medical book known to all practitioners. The same success, and for the same reason, attends every well-advertised quack medicine. The purchasers are aware that the composition of such drugs must be known to all chemists who think it worth their while to analyse them; and they are aware that if they really possessed the wonderful properties claimed for them, the whole medical body would be competing for their possession. But such considerations have no weight with determined credulity. The educated doctors do not propose to work miracles with their drugs; and the quack doctor's word, therefore, like that of his brother in mystery the Ghost, is taken 'for a thousand pound.'

POETS LAUREATE.

Some uncertainty still appears to prevail as to the precise origin of the designation 'Poet Laureate,' as applied to an officer in the household of the English monarchs. There is not, however, any reasonable doubt that what may be said to constitute the essence of the appointment—payments in money and wine for extolling the deeds and virtues of royalty—dates from at least as far back as the reign of Henry III., or that the primary title of the gentleman so retained and honoured was that of Versificator Regis, or king's versifier. Mr Gifford, indeed, tells us in his preface to Ben Jonson's works, that till the patent of Charles I., conferring upon that author an annual pension of one hundred pounds and a tierce of Canary wine, there had been no regular appointment of a court laureate. 'Hitherto,' he observes, 'the laurel appears to have been a mere title adopted at pleasure by those who were employed to write for the court, but conferring no privileges, and establishing no claim to a salary.' There is a misstatement of fact and a confusion of inference in this passage, surprising from so well-informed and acute a writer. The title, Poeta Laureatus, had a precise signification and a distinct origin, although not always a loyal one, and could not with any propriety have been assumed by *any* person 'employed to write for the court.' That the payments were not made with the perfect exactitude which in these days marks disbursements from the Queen's Exchequer, is true enough, not only with regard to this particular office, but every other in the earlier royal households; but that the salaries of the king's versifiers were from time to time ordered to be regularly paid, there can be no question. A few words, before attempting to thread our way through the haze which shrouds the authors whom the Plantagenets and Tudors delighted to honour, upon the signification of the term 'Laureate,' as applied to poets, versifiers, or rhetoricians, may be acceptable, and will place the matter in a sufficiently clear light.

Mr Thomas Warton, a comparatively modern laureate, and the historian of an art for which he himself possessed but slight faculty or power, is at pains to show that students at the English universities, Oxford especially, who graduated in grammar, which included rhetoric and versification, were crowned with a wreath of laurel, and that the king's laureate was at first simply 'a graduated rhetorician in the service of the court.' The examples which he gives sufficiently prove, however, that a faculty for poetry, or rather that which at the time passed for it at the universities, was generally essential to the acquirement of the 'bays.' In 1470, John Watson, a student in grammar, was awarded the wreath on condition of writing one hundred Latin verses in praise of the university, *or* a Latin comedy. Richard Smyth and Maurice Byrcheshaw were also 'crowned,' after each had composed one hundred Latin hexameters to the glory of Oxford. An additional stipulation with Byrcheshaw was, that neither Ovid's 'Art of Love' nor the elegies of Pamphilus should be studied in his auditory. Other instances could be easily adduced; and there is, besides, no question that the custom of crowning successful graduates was much more common in the universities of France and Germany than in those of England. The formula used by the chancellors of the university of Strasbourg on these occasions is very emphatic:—'I create you, placed in a chair of state, crowned with laurel and ivy, and wearing a ring of gold, and the same do pronounce poets laureate, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' The crowning of Petrarch in 1341, and of Tasso in 1594, by the senate of Rome, will at once recur to the reader's mind, and will, in conjunction with what has been previously stated, justify the conclusion that the 'laurel' could not, as Mr Gifford pretends, be assumed at pleasure before the reign of Charles I.; and that a versifier in the service of the early English kings, if not 'crowned' by the sovereign, owed his title of laureate to having received the wreath from some other competent authority. In course of time custom gave the title, as of course, to the person nominated to the office by the monarch; but originally there can be little doubt that unless duly 'laurelled,' the king's versifier was simply 'Versificator Regis.' This explanation reconciles many apparent contradictions in the notices scattered here and there with regard to the actual holders of the royal laureateship.

The first king's poet or versifier who is known to have been paid a yearly salary from the royal exchequer was one Henry de Avranches. He lived in the reign of Henry III., and by precepts, dated 1249 and 1251, the king's treasurer was ordered to pay the said Master Henry one hundred shillings yearly. There were, however, previous recognised adulators of the English monarchs: one Walo panegyrised Henry I.; and Baston, whom Bale styles 'Laureatus apud Oxoniensis,' did the same for Richard I.'s crusade; but the essentiality of a court laureateship—that of a fixed income paid for the express purpose of having the king's praises duly chanted in prose or verse—is first strictly provable in the case of Henry de Avranches. The butt of

Canary wine may also have had its origin in this reign, although the gift in this instance was conferred on 'Richard, the royal harper,' to whom his majesty ordered 'a pipe of wine and forty shillings' to be given. Beatrice, the harper's wife—a 'Jongleresse,' or 'gongleresse,' who, it is conjectured, accompanied her husband's harping by pantomimic action—was also ordered a pipe of wine, but no money. Henry de Avranches, we find, had the misfortune, in some of his productions, to wound the delicate susceptibilities of the Cornish people, by imputing to them roughness and rusticity of manners. This was felt to be altogether preposterous and abominable; and a native of the calumniated county—one Michael Blaunpayne, who, if we may judge by the scrap of Latinity left us, had as rough and fluent a tongue as such a service could require—was employed to return the insult in kind. The retaliatory verses—recited before Hugh, abbot of Westminster, Hugh de Mortimer, official of the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop elect of Winchester, and the bishop of Rochester—contain a charming description of the corporality of the first salaried king's poet. Master Henry de Avranches is therein declared to have the leg of a goat, the thigh of a sparrow, the side of a boar, the nose of a whelp (the pug variety is perhaps meant), the tooth and cheek of a mule, the forehead of a hog, and the head of a bull, and, moreover, to be all over of the colour of a Moor. History is silent with respect to the continuators of the loyal line of poets until we arrive at the reign of Edward IV., where we alight upon the name of one John Kay, the author of a prose translation of a Latin poem on the siege of Rhodes. John Kay, in his address to the king, subscribes himself 'hys humble poete laureate.' This is the first instance in which the name of poet laureate is known to have been used by the king's versifiers.

A few retrospective words will here be necessary with respect to Chaucer, who lived, we wish we could say flourished, in the previous reigns of Edward III., Richard II., and Henry IV., inasmuch as it is sometimes asserted that the father of English poetry was one of the near successors to the title and honours of Henry de Avranches. The facts which have given a faint colour to this assumption are these:—In Edward's reign, and during the life of his patron, John of Gaunt, Chaucer was allowed a pitcher of wine per day from the king's stores. He fell subsequently, as we all know, from his attachment to the Lancasterian cause, into peril and disgrace; and this moderate dolium was stopped. Richard appears to have relented, as we find he was allowed (1393) a yearly tun of wine. Henry IV. (Bolingbroke) continued this donation, and added forty marks yearly. In neither of the 'docquets' or 'precepts' ordering these gifts is there a syllable that affords any ground for supposing that they were to be paid for in laudatory odes or addresses. Then there is the positive testimony of Skelton; and it is, moreover, idle to assume, that a poet who receives the bounty of a monarch must necessarily be a 'poet laureate' in the conventional use of the term. Were this so, there would be many laureates in the present day besides Alfred Tennyson. Mr Southey, to be sure, in his natural anxiety to gem the list of questionable celebrities with a great name, claims, in his 'Carmen Triumphale' (1814), that of Edmund Spenser for no better reason—

> 'In happy hour doth he receive
> The laurel, meed of famous bards of yore,
> Which Dryden and diviner Spenser bore.'

It is quite true that Queen Elizabeth bestowed a pension of fifty pounds a year upon the author of the 'Fairy Queen;' but the patent (1590) which authorised this grant contains not a syllable about the laureateship, which, moreover, in Spenser's time, was appropriately filled by two very different persons—Charles Edwards and Samuel Daniel. Neither the name of Geoffrey Chaucer nor that of Edmund Spenser has, we may be satisfied, the slightest claim to be placed in the list of laureates.

Reverting to the partially-ascertained order of succession following Edward IV.'s John Kay, one Andrew Bernard, an Augustine monk, was, we find, Henry VII.'s laureate. His salary was at first a very meagre one—only 'ten marks a year, till he can obtain something better.' This he eagerly did, being appointed preceptor and historiographer to Prince Henry. He wrote an address on the marriage of the king's daughter, another to Henry VIII. on his auspicious tenth year, another on his thirteenth year, and a new-year's gift for 1515.

Next on the roll comes John Skelton. He was rector of Diss in Norfolk, and appears to have been of somewhat doubtful morality. He got himself into trouble by 'buffooneries' in the pulpit, and writing satirical ballads against the mendicants. For these vagaries, and also, it was said, 'for having been guilty of certain crimes, *as most poets are*,' Nykke, bishop of Norwich, rebuked and finally suspended him. The alleged crimes consisted, according to Delafield, in his being married; Fuller says, in keeping a concubine. The laureate's saucy wit was afterwards levelled at Cardinal Wolsey; and the unfortunate rhymster, hotly pursued by the great man's retainers, was obliged to run for it. Luckily, he succeeded in reaching Westminster Abbey, where the abbot, Islip, afforded him sanctuary and kind treatment till his death. He was buried in the adjoining church of St Margaret's.

Richard Edwards, a native of Somersetshire, came after Skelton. He is stated in the patents to have been 'Laureate Poet, Player, Musician, and Buffoon,' to the queens Mary and Elizabeth; and he was, there is no question, the delight of those monarchs' courts and ladies of honour. He is the writer of 'The Paradise of Dainty Devices.'

The next of the 'famous bards of yore,' as Mr Southey styles them, was Samuel Daniel. This gentleman appears to have been equal to the salary only, the laureate work having been done by Ben Jonson—not, however, without reward. This latter is the first eminent name on the list; but the fame of its possessor is tarnished, not heightened, by the court flatteries he strung together. Charles I., whilst Daniel still lived (1630), with much kindly consideration for the then aged and ailing man, granted him an annuity of one hundred pounds, and a tierce of Canary wine annually. This patent it was which Mr Gifford, in his anxiety to disconnect Jonson from preceding kings' poets, regards as the first creation of a regular orthodox laureate. The position is clearly untenable. Had Mr Gifford said that Jonson was the first tolerably well-paid laureate, he would have been much nearer the truth. Daniel was so annoyed at the affront, as he construed it, put upon him, that he at once withdrew from court, and soon afterwards died, it was said, of chagrin. His rival and successor did not long survive him.

'Rare Ben Jonson' was succeeded by D'Avenant, the scandal-reputed son of Shakspeare, and certainly a fierce royalist, and patentee of the Duke's Theatre, in Lincoln's Inn. He attempted a revival of theatricals during the reign of the Puritans, and only escaped the vengeance of the fanatics of the period through the kindly intervention of Milton. His reputation was much higher as a player than as a poet—a distinction which does not necessarily suppose very exalted histrionic talent, as 'Gondibert,' a kind of domestic epic, and the least forgotten of his pieces, fully testifies.

D'Avenant died in 1668, and on the 18th of August 1670 John Dryden was invested with the court laurel. Being also royal historiographer, his income from the two offices reached two hundred a year, besides the

'Canary.' The patent set forth that the laureateship was bestowed on 'John Dryden, M.A., in consideration of his many acceptable services theretofore done to his present majesty, and for an observation of his learning and eminent abilities, and his great skill and elegant style, both in verse and prose.' Servility to worldly greatness was Dryden's strongly-marked characteristic; but the Revolution overthrew the chief altars before which he had burned such lavish incense, dispossessed him of his offices, and turned his genius to manlier, healthier themes.

The next laureate was Nahum Tate, of whom it is enough to say that he assisted his two immediate predecessors in maltreating Shakspeare. Rowe, faintly known in these days as the author of the 'Fair Penitent,' and one or two similar dramas, succeeded to Tate; and Rowe in his turn yielded the laurel to the Reverend Laurence Eusden. He, in his turn, shuffled off the stage; when entered Colley Cibber, the hero of the 'Dunciad,' and a personage whose name, from various causes, seems more intimately associated with the laureateship than any other. Cibber's 'Odes,' like his plays, are thoroughly unreadable; and yet the discriminating 'Town' considered him for some time to be a very pretty fellow in the dramatic line. So sublimely, stolidly unconscious was Cibber himself of his own incapacity, that the sharp arrows of Pope's stinging sarcasm had no more effect on him than needle-points would on the hide of a rhinoceros. Mr Cibber was a player as well as poet; but on attaining the laurel, he retired from his profession, and died in old age, and worldly prosperity and consideration.

William Whitehead, a person of very humble birth—he was the son of a baker of Cambridge—succeeded to the tarnished wreath. He possessed considerable rhyming facility, had published some trifling poems, and been noticed by Pope; but he owed his appointment far more to the influence of the Earls of Jersey and Harcourt, with whose sons he had travelled several years on the continent in the capacity of tutor, than to any reputation he had acquired for verse-making. He had already received, whilst yet in Italy, 'two genteel patent places, usually united; namely, the secretaryship and the registrarship of the Order of the Bath.' The minister, after receiving from Gray a peremptory refusal to accept the 'honour,' conferred the office upon Whitehead. When the offer was made to the author of the 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' it was intimated that the customary 'work' would not with him be rigorously insisted upon. Whitehead, on the contrary, was informed that a full measure of odes, addresses, *etcetera*, would be expected. This Mason, who had also been a candidate for the vacant office, thought hard upon his friend Whitehead, whose success in the matter of the laureateship he appears to have readily forgiven. Mason also 'wondered' at the stipulation—'George II. being known to have no taste for poetry.' 'The wonder,' pertinently remarks the late Thomas Campbell, 'is quite misplaced. If the king had possessed a taste for poetry, he would have abolished the laureate odes.'

The utmost efforts of Mr Whitehead were impotent to dispel the inodorous reputation which Cibber had brought upon birthday odes; and it was not long before a storm of ridicule and abuse burst upon himself—partially, at least, justified by the laboured hyperboles upon the superhuman virtues of the monarch and his family which he put forth. 'It was lamentable,' quietly remarks Gray, in allusion to the supposedly vindictive motives of the writers by whom Whitehead was assailed—'it was lamentable to find beings capable of envying a poet laureate.' Whitehead bore it all pretty well till assailed by the coarse invective and merciless sarcasm of Churchill, who tore the laureate's reputation so thoroughly to shreds—to very tatters—that Garrick refused to accept his 'Trip to Scotland' except on condition that its author's name should be concealed; and 'Variety,' a tale, could only be published with a chance of success by adopting the same precaution. It was, however, as true then as it is now, that an author can only be permanently written down by himself; and Campbell, whilst blaming Churchill's violence, admits in substance the justice of his critical strictures.

Thomas Warton, the historian of English poetry, succeeded Whitehead. Dr Johnson, according to Mr Mant's report, once said that 'Warton was the only man of genius he knew without a heart.' If poetical genius be here meant, the learned lexicographer was clearly wrong in imputing it to the laureate; and we may therefore, in charity, incline to the hope that he was equally in error as to his 'want of heart.' Mr Thomas Warton was not, however, deficient in the chief accomplishment observable in these 'famous bards of yore'—he laid on his meaningless, sickening adulation with a trowel.

Henry James Pye is the last of the wreathed brotherhood till we arrive at our own time. In this free country, although compelled to support the laureate, no one is obliged by law to read his odes; and we are not therefore afraid to confess that we are blissfully ignorant of Henry James Pye.

In 1813, Mr Robert Southey's acceptance of the laureateship was held by that eminent and facile writer's numerous admirers to have restored the office to respectability, if not to dignity. Many, too, there were who blamed him for stooping, as they thought, from his status as a poet to pick up so slight a thing—slight, that is, apart from the pension and the Canary, which good wine, by the way, Mr Southey exchanged for twenty-seven pounds yearly—as the laurel wreath. We cannot think there was any condescension in the matter, inasmuch as Mr Southey occupied no very lofty position as a poet; although possessing varied talents of a high order, fine and cultivated taste, and even much poetic feeling. The laureate labours of Jonson and Dryden shed no lustre upon the brotherhood; and neither, it will be admitted, have the loyal odes of Mr Southey been more successful. The subject does not appear to be a propitious one; no one, with the ever-recurring exception of Shakspeare, has greatly succeeded at it; and it may, we think, be doubted if

> 'The fair vestal, throned by the west,'

would have been drawn in such glittering rainbow colours, if the passage in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' had been done to order. The general failure perhaps in some degree arises from the cause suggested by Waller to King Charles, in excuse of the greater force and beauty of his panegyric upon Cromwell, when compared with that on his majesty, 'that poets succeeded best in fiction'—ordinary ones at least, who are perhaps oppressed and weighed down by the grandeur and glory they would celebrate. Mr Southey's first ode is a case in point. Not a line of the 'Carmen Triumphale' found an echo or left a remembrance in the national heart, profoundly stirred as it was by the events which the ode chronicles. The funeral song on the untimely death of the Princess Charlotte is the best of Mr Southey's laureate compositions; and this is but faint praise. Of the 'Vision of Judgment' it is impossible to speak except in terms of strong censure. How a man of Mr Southey's usually correct taste, disciplined imagination, and generous sympathies, could have given such a piece to the world, is in very truth perfectly astounding.

At Mr Southey's death, the laurel crown devolved upon the already whitened brows of William Wordsworth. Age had done its work upon the bard of Rydal Mount, and the ode he composed on the occasion

of the installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of Cambridge University, was consequently unworthy of his genius. *Requiescat in pace!*

Thus briefly have we glanced through the by no means brilliant roll of known kings' or laureate poets. Let us recapitulate them in their order of appointment: Henry de Avranches, John Kay, Andrew Bernard, John Skelton, Richard Edwards, Samuel Daniel, Ben Jonson, William D'Avenant, John Dryden, Nahum Tate, Nicholas Rowe, Laurence Eusden, Colley Cibber, William Whitehead, Thomas Warton, Henry James Pye, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth.

To these names must now be added that of Alfred Tennyson. That in his day the laurel wreath may be entwined and illumined by the flowers and light of true poesy, must be every man's earnest hope; but however this may be, we are quite sure he will not offend the Queen's good sense, or shock the serious, honest loyalty of her subjects, by repetitions of the grotesque exaggerations and extravagant conceits indulged in by the great majority of his predecessors —servile platitudes, which insulted the sovereigns to whom they were addressed, and rendered the very name of poet laureate contemptible and ridiculous.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ATTORNEY.

JANE ECCLES.

The criminal business of the office was, during the first three or four years of our partnership, entirely superintended by Mr Flint; he being more *au fait*, from early practice, than myself in the art and mystery of prosecuting and defending felons, and I was thus happily relieved of duties which, in the days when George III. was king, were frequently very oppressive and revolting. The criminal practitioner dwelt in an atmosphere tainted alike with cruelty and crime, and pulsating alternately with merciless decrees of death, and the shrieks and wailings of sentenced guilt. And not always guilt! There exist many records of proofs, incontestable, but obtained too late, of innocence having been legally strangled on the gallows in other cases than that of Eliza Fenning. How could it be otherwise with a criminal code crowded in every line with penalties of death, nothing but—death? Juster, wiser times have dawned upon us, in which truer notions prevail of what man owes to man, even when sitting in judgment on transgressors; and this we owe, let us not forget, to the exertions of a band of men who, undeterred by the sneers of the reputedly wise and *practical* men of the world, and the taunts of 'influential' newspapers, persisted in teaching that the rights of property could be more firmly cemented than by the shedding of blood—law, justice, personal security more effectually vindicated than by the gallows. Let me confess that I also was, for many years, amongst the mockers, and sincerely held such 'theorists' and 'dreamers' as Sir Samuel Romilly and his fellow-workers in utter contempt. Not so my partner Mr Flint. Constantly in the presence of criminal judges and juries, he had less confidence in the unerring verity of their decisions than persons less familiar with them, or who see them only through the medium of newspapers. Nothing could exceed his distress of mind if, in cases in which he was prosecuting attorney, a convict died persisting in his innocence, or without a full confession of guilt. And to such a pitch did this morbidly-sensitive feeling at length arrive, that he all-at once refused to undertake, or in any way meddle with, criminal prosecutions, and they were consequently turned over to our head clerk, with occasional assistance from me if there happened to be a press of business of the sort. Mr Flint still, however, retained a monopoly of the *defences*, except when, from some temporary cause or other, he happened to be otherwise engaged, when they fell to me. One of these I am about to relate, the result of which, whatever other impression it produced, thoroughly cured me—as it may the reader—of any propensity to sneer or laugh at criminal-law reformers and denouncers of the gallows.

One forenoon, during the absence of Mr Flint in Wiltshire, a Mrs Margaret Davies called at the office, in apparently great distress of mind. This lady, I must premise, was an old, or at all events an elderly maiden, of some four-and-forty years of age—I have heard a very intimate female friend of hers say she would never see fifty again, but this was spite—and possessed of considerable house property in rather poor localities. She found abundant employment for energies which might otherwise have turned to cards and scandal, in collecting her weekly, monthly, and quarterly rents, and in promoting, or fancying she did, the religious and moral welfare of her tenants. Very barefaced, I well knew, were the impositions practised upon her credulous good-nature in money matters, and I strongly suspected the spiritual and moral promises and performances of her motley tenantry exhibited as much discrepancy as those pertaining to rent. Still, deceived or cheated as she might be, good Mrs Davies never wearied in what she conceived to be welldoing, and was ever ready to pour balm and oil into the wounds of the sufferer, however self-inflicted or deserved.

'What is the matter now?' I asked as soon as the good lady was seated, and had untied and loosened her bonnet, and thrown back her shawl, fast walking having heated her prodigiously. 'Nothing worse than transportation is, I hope, likely to befall any of those interesting clients of yours?'

'You are a hard-hearted man, Mr Sharp,' replied Mrs Davies between a smile and a cry; 'but being a lawyer, that is of course natural, and, as I am not here to consult you as a Christian, of no consequence.'

'Complimentary, Mrs Davies; but pray go on.'

'You know Jane Eccles, one of my tenants in Bank Buildings: the embroidress who adopted her sister's orphan child?'

'I remember her name. She obtained, if I recollect rightly, a balance of wages for her due to the child's father, a mate, who died at sea. Well, what has befallen her?'

'A terrible accusation has been preferred against her,' rejoined Mrs Davies; 'but as for a moment believing it, that is quite out of the question. Jane Eccles,' continued the warm-hearted lady, at the same time extracting a crumpled newspaper from the miscellaneous contents of her reticule—'Jane Eccles works hard from morning till night, keeps herself to herself; her little nephew and her rooms are always as clean and nice as a new pin; she attends church regularly; and pays her rent punctually to the day. This disgraceful story, therefore,' she added, placing the journal in my hands, '*cannot* be true.'

I glanced over the police news: 'Uttering forged Bank-of-England notes, knowing them to be forged,' I exclaimed, 'The devil!'

'There's no occasion to be spurting that name out so loudly, Mr Sharp,' said Mrs Davies with some asperity, 'especially in a lawyer's office. People have been wrongfully accused before to-day, I suppose?'

I was intent on the report, and not answering, she continued, 'I heard nothing of it till I read the shameful account in the paper half an hour agone. The poor slandered girl was, I daresay, afraid or ashamed to send for me.'

'This appears to be a very bad case, Mrs Davies,' I said at length. 'Three forged ten-pound notes changed in one day at different shops each time, under the pretence of purchasing articles of small amount, and another ten-pound note found in her pocket! All that has, I must say, a very ugly look.'

'I don't care,' exclaimed Mrs Davies quite fiercely, 'if it looks as ugly as sin, or if the whole Bank of England was found in her pocket! I know Jane Eccles well: she nursed me last spring through the fever; and I would be upon my oath that the whole story, from beginning to end, is an invention of the devil, or something worse.'

'Jane Eccles,' I persisted, 'appears to have been unable or unwilling to give the slightest explanation as to how she became possessed of the spurious notes. Who is this brother of hers, "of such highly respectable appearance," according to the report, who was permitted a private interview with her previous to the examination?'

'She has no brother that I have ever heard of,' said Mrs Davies. 'It must be a mistake of the papers.'

'That is not likely. You observed of course that she was fully committed—and no wonder!'

Mrs Davies's faith in the young woman's integrity was not to be shaken by any evidence save that of her own bodily eyes, and I agreed to see Jane Eccles on the morrow, and make the best arrangements for the defence—at Mrs Davies's charge—which the circumstances and the short time I should have for preparation—the Old Bailey session would be on in a few days—permitted. The matter so far settled, Mrs Margaret hurried off to see what had become of little Henry, the prisoner's nephew.

I visited Jane Eccles the next day in Newgate. She was a well-grown young woman of about two or three-and-twenty—not exactly pretty perhaps, but very well looking. Her brown hair was plainly worn, without a cap, and the expression of her face was, I thought, one of sweetness and humility, contradicted in some degree by rather harsh lines about the mouth, denoting strong will and purpose. As a proof of the existence of this last characteristic, I may here mention that when her first overweening confidence had yielded to doubt, she, although dotingly fond of her nephew, at this time about eight years of age, firmly refused to see him, 'in order,' she once said to me, and the thought brought a deadly pallor to her face—'in order that, should the worst befall, her memory might not be involuntarily connected in his mind with images of dungeons, and disgrace, and shame. Jane Eccles had received what is called in the country 'a good schooling,' and the books Mrs Davies had lent her she had eagerly perused. She was therefore to a certain extent a cultivated person; and her speech and manners were mild, gentle, and, so to speak, religious. I generally found, when I visited her, a Bible or prayer-book in her hand. This, however, from my experience, comparatively slight though it was, did not much impress me in her favour—devotional sentiment so easily, for a brief time, assumed, being in nine such cases out of ten a hypocritical deceit. Still she, upon the whole, made a decidedly favourable impression on me, and I no longer so much wondered at the bigotry of unbelief manifested by Mrs Davies in behalf of her apparently amiable and grateful protégée.

But beyond the moral doubt thus suggested of the prisoner's guilt, my interviews with her utterly failed to extract anything from her in rebutment of the charge upon which she was about to be arraigned. At first she persisted in asserting that the prosecution was based upon manifest error; that the impounded notes, instead of being forged, were genuine Bank-of-England paper. It was some time before I succeeded in convincing her that this hope, to which she so eagerly, desperately clung, was a fallacious one. I did so at last; and either, thought I, as I marked her varying colour and faltering voice, 'either you are a consummate actress, or else the victim of some frightful delusion or conspiracy.'

'I will see you, if you please, to-morrow,' she said, looking up from the chair upon which, with her head bowed and her face covered with her hands, she had been seated for several minutes in silence. 'My thoughts are confused now, but to-morrow I shall be more composed; better able to decide if——to talk, I mean, of this unhappy business.'

I thought it better to comply without remonstrance, and at once took my leave.

When I returned the next afternoon, the governor of the prison informed me that the brother of my client, James Eccles, quite a dashing gentleman, had had a long interview with her. He had left about two hours before, with the intention, he said, of calling upon me.

I was conducted to the room where my conferences with the prisoner usually took place. In a few minutes she appeared, much flushed and excited, it seemed to be alternately with trembling joy and hope, and doubt and nervous fear.

'Well,' I said, 'I trust you are now ready to give me your unreserved confidence, without which, be assured, that any reasonable hope of a successful issue from the peril in which you are involved is out of the question.'

The varying emotions I have noticed were clearly traceable as they swept over her tell-tale countenance during the minute or so that elapsed before she spoke.

'Tell me candidly, sir,' she said at last, 'whether, if I owned to you that the notes were given to me by a—a person, whom I cannot, if I would, produce, to purchase various articles at different shops, and return him—the person I mean—the change; and that I made oath this was done by me in all innocence of heart, as the God of heaven and earth truly knows it was, it would avail me?'

'Not in the least,' I replied, angry at such trifling. 'How can you ask such a question? We must *find* the person who, you intimate, has deceived you, and placed your life in peril; and if that can be proved, hang him instead of you. I speak plainly, Miss Eccles,' I added in a milder tone; 'perhaps you may think unfeelingly, but there is no further time for playing with this dangerous matter. To-morrow a true bill will be found against you, and your trial may then come on immediately. If you are careless for yourself, you ought to have some thought for the sufferings of your excellent friend Mrs Davies; for your nephew, soon perhaps to be left friendless and destitute.'

'Oh spare me—spare me!' sobbed the unhappy young woman, sinking nervelessly into a seat. 'Have pity upon me, wretched, bewildered as I am!' Tears relieved her, and after a while, she said, 'It is useless, sir, to prolong this interview. I could not, I solemnly assure you, if I would, tell you where to search for or find the person of whom I spoke. And,' she added, whilst the lines about her mouth of which I have spoken grew distinct and rigid, 'I would not if I could. What indeed would it, as I have been told and believe, avail, but to cause the death of two deceived innocent persons instead of one? Besides,' she continued, trying to speak with firmness, and repress the shudder which crept over and shook her as with ague—'besides, whatever the verdict, the penalty will not, cannot, I am sure, I know, be—be'——

I understood her plainly enough, although her resolution failed to sustain her through the sentence.

'Who is this brother, James Eccles he calls himself, whom you saw at the police-office, and who has twice been here, I understand—once to-day?'

A quick start revealed the emotion with which she heard the question, and her dilated eyes rested upon me for a moment with eager scrutiny. She speedily recovered her presence of mind, and with her eyes again fixed on the floor, said in a quivering voice, 'My brother! Yes—as you say—my brother.'

'Mrs Davies says you have no brother!' I sharply rejoined.

'Good Mrs Davies,' she replied in a tone scarcely

above a whisper, and without raising her head, 'does not know all our family.'

A subterfuge was, I was confident, concealed in these words; but after again and again urging her to confide in me, and finding warning and persuasion alike useless, I withdrew discomfited and angry; and withal as much concerned and grieved as baffled and indignant. On going out, I arranged with the governor that the 'brother,' if he again made his appearance, should be detained, *bongré malgré*, till my arrival. Our precaution was too late: he did not reappear; and so little notice had any one taken of his person, that to advertise a description of him with a reward for his apprehension was hopeless.

A true bill was found, and two hours afterwards Jane Eccles was placed in the dock. The trial did not last more than twenty minutes, at the end of which, an unhesitating verdict of guilty was returned, and she was duly sentenced to be hanged by the neck till she was dead. We had retained the ablest counsel practising in the court, but, with no tangible defence, their efforts were merely thrown away. Upon being asked what she had to say why the sentence of the law should not be carried into effect, she repeated her previous statement—that the notes had been given her to change by a person in whom she reposed the utmost confidence; and that she had not the slightest thought of evil or fraud in what she did. That person, however, she repeated once more, could not be produced. Her assertions only excited a derisive smile; and all necessary forms having been gone through, she was removed from the bar.

The unhappy woman bore the ordeal through which she had just passed with much firmness. Once only, whilst sentence was being passed, her high-strung resolution appeared to falter and give way. I was watching her intently, and I observed that she suddenly directed a piercing look towards a distant part of the crowded court. In a moment her eye lightened, the expression of extreme horror which had momently darkened her countenance passed away, and her partial composure returned. I had instinctively, as it were, followed her glance, and thought I detected a tall man enveloped in a cloak engaged in dumb momentary communication with her. I jumped up from my seat, and hastened as quickly as I could through the thronged passages to the spot, and looked eagerly around, but the man, whosoever he might be, was gone.

The next act in this sad drama was the decision of the Privy Council upon the recorder's report. It came. Several were reprieved, but amongst them was *not* Jane Eccles. She and nine others were to perish at eight o'clock on the following morning.

The anxiety and worry inseparable from this most unhappy affair, which, from Mr Flint's protracted absence, I had exclusively to bear, fairly knocked me up, and on the evening of the day on which the decision of the council was received, I went to bed much earlier than usual, and really ill. Sleep I could not, and I was tossing restlessly about, vainly endeavouring to banish from my mind the gloomy and terrible images connected with the wretched girl and her swiftly-coming fate, when a quick tap sounded on the door, and a servant's voice announced that one of the clerks had brought a letter which the superscription directed to be read without a moment's delay. I sprang out of bed, snatched the letter, and eagerly ran it over. It was from the Newgate chaplain, a very worthy, humane gentleman, and stated that, on hearing the result of the deliberations of the Privy Council, all the previous stoicism and fortitude exhibited by Jane Eccles had completely given way, and she had abandoned herself to the wildest terror and despair. As soon as she could speak coherently, she implored the governor with frantic earnestness to send for me. As this was not only quite useless in the opinion of that official, but against the rules, the prisoner's request was not complied with. The chaplain, however, thinking it might be as well that I should know of her desire to see me, had of his own accord sent me this note. He thought that possibly the sheriffs would permit me to have a brief interview with the condemned prisoner in the morning, if I arrived sufficiently early; and although it could avail nothing as regarded her fate in this world, still it might perhaps calm the frightful tumult of emotion by which she was at present tossed and shaken, and enable her to meet the inevitable hour with fortitude and resignation.

It was useless to return to bed after receiving such a communication, and I forthwith dressed myself, determined to sit up and read, if I could, till the hour at which I might hope to be admitted to the jail should strike. Slowly and heavily the dark night limped away, and as the first rays of the cold wintry dawn reached the earth, I sallied forth. A dense, brutal crowd were already assembled in front of the prison, and hundreds of well-dressed sight-seers occupied the opposite windows, morbidly eager for the rising of the curtain upon the mournful tragedy about to be enacted. I obtained admission without much difficulty, but, till the arrival of the sheriffs, no conference with the condemned prisoners could be possibly permitted. Those important functionaries happened on this morning to arrive unusually late, and I paced up and down the paved corridor in a fever of impatience and anxiety. They were at last announced, but before I could, in the hurry and confusion, obtain speech of either of them, the dismal bell tolled out, and I felt with a shudder that it was no longer possible to effect my object. 'Perhaps it is better so,' observed the reverend chaplain in a whisper. 'She has been more composed for the last two or three hours, and is now, I trust, in a better frame of mind for death.' I turned, sick at heart, to leave the place, and in my agitation missing the right way, came directly in view of the terrible procession. Jane Eccles saw me, and a terrific scream, followed by frantic heartrending appeals to me to save her, burst with convulsive effort from her white quivering lips. Never will the horror of that moment pass from my remembrance. I staggered back, as if every spasmodic word struck me like a blow; and then, directed by one of the turnkeys, sped in an opposite direction as fast as my trembling limbs could carry me—the shrieks of the wretched victim, the tolling of the dreadful bell, and the obscene jeers and mocks of the foul crowd through which I had to force my way, evoking a confused tumult of disgust and horror in my brain, which, if long continued, would have driven me mad. On reaching home, I was bled freely, and got to bed. This treatment, I have no doubt, prevented a violent access of fever; for, as it was, several days passed before I could be safely permitted to re-engage in business.

On revisiting the office, a fragment of a letter written by Jane Eccles a few hours previous to her death, and evidently addressed to Mrs Davies, was placed by Mr Flint, who had by this time returned, before me. The following is an exact copy of it, with the exception that the intervals which I have marked with dots, ... were filled with erasures and blots, and that every word seemed to have been traced by a hand smitten with palsy:—

'From my Death-place, *Midnight.*

'Dear Madam—No, beloved friend, mother let me call you ..... Oh kind, gentle mother, I am to die ..... to be killed in a few hours by cruel men!—I, so young, so unprepared for death, and yet guiltless! Oh never doubt that I am guiltless of the offence for which they will have the heart to hang me ..... Nobody, they say, can save me now; yet if I could see the lawyer ..... I have been deceived, cruelly deceived,

madam—buoyed up by lying hopes, till just now the thunder burst, and I—oh God!..... As they spoke, the fearful chapter in the Testament came bodily before me—the rending of the vail in twain, the terrible darkness, and the opened graves!....: I did not write for this, but my brain aches and dazzles..... It is too late—too late, they all tell me!..... Ah, if these dreadful laws were not so swift, I might yet—but no; *he* clearly proved to me how useless....; I must not think of that..... It is of my nephew, of your Henry, child of my affections, that I would speak. Oh, would that I..... But hark!—they are coming..... The day has dawned..... to me the day of judgment!.....'

This incoherent scrawl only confirmed my previous suspicions, but it was useless to dwell further on the melancholy subject. The great axe had fallen, and whether justly or unjustly, would, I feared, as in many, very many other cases, never be clearly ascertained in this world. I was mistaken. Another case of 'uttering forged Bank-of-England notes, knowing them to be forged,' which came under our cognisance a few months afterwards, revived the fading memory of Jane Eccles's early doom, and cleared up every obscurity connected with it.

The offender in this new case was a tall, dark-complexioned, handsome man, of about thirty years of age, of the name of Justin Arnold. His lady mother, whose real name I shall conceal under that of Barton, retained us for her son's defence, and from her and other sources we learned the following particulars:—

Justin Arnold was the lady's son by a former marriage. Mrs Barton, a still splendid woman, had, in second nuptials, espoused a very wealthy person, and from time to time had covertly supplied Justin Arnold's extravagance. This, however, from the wild course the young man pursued, could not be for ever continued, and after many warnings, the supplies were stopped. Incapable of reformation, Justin Arnold, in order to obtain the means of dissipation, connected himself with a cleverly-organized band of swindlers and forgers, who so adroitly managed their nefarious business, that, till his capture, they had contrived to keep themselves clear of the law—the inferior tools and dupes having been alone caught in its fatal meshes. The defence, under these circumstances necessarily a difficult, almost impossible one, was undertaken by Mr Flint, and conducted by him with his accustomed skill and energy.

I took a very slight interest in the matter, and heard very little concerning it till its judicial conclusion by the conviction of the offender, and his condemnation to death. The decision on the recorder's report was this time communicated to the authorities of Newgate on a Saturday, so that the batch ordered for execution, amongst whom was Justin Arnold, would not be hanged till the Monday morning. Rather late in the evening a note once more reached me from the chaplain of the prison. Justin Arnold wished to see me—*me*, not Mr Flint. He had something of importance to communicate, he said, relative to a person in whom I had once felt great interest. It flashed across me that this Justin might be the 'brother' of Jane Eccles, and I determined to see him. I immediately sought out one of the sheriffs, and obtained an order empowering me to see the prisoner on the afternoon of the morrow (Sunday).

I found that the convict had expressed great anxiety lest I should decline to see him. My hoped-for visit was the only matter which appeared to occupy the mind or excite the care of the mocking, desperate young man; even the early and shameful termination of his own life on the morrow he seemed to be utterly reckless of. Thus prepared, I was the less surprised at the scene which awaited me in the prisoner's cell, where I found him in angry altercation with the pale affrighted chaplain.

I had never seen Justin Arnold before; this I was convinced of the instant I saw him; but he knew, and greeted me instantly by name. His swarthy, excited features were flushed and angry, and after briefly thanking me for complying with his wishes, he added in a violent, rapid tone, 'This good man has been teasing me. He says, and truly, that I have defied God by my life; and now he wishes me to mock that inscrutable Being, on the eve of death, by words without sense, meaning, or truth!'

'No, no, no!' ejaculated the reverend gentleman. 'I exhorted you to true repentance, to peace, charity, to'——

'True repentance, peace, charity!' broke in the prisoner with a scornful burst: 'when my heart is full of rage, and bitterness, and despair! Give me *time* for this repentance which you say is so needful—time to lure back long since banished hope, and peace, and faith! Poh!—you but flout me with words without meaning. I am unfit, you say, for the presence of men, but quite fit for that of God, before whom you are about to arrogantly cast me! Be it so: my deeds upon my head! It is at least not my fault that I am hurled to judgment before the Eternal Judge himself commanded my presence there!'

'He may be unworthy to live,' murmured the scared chaplain, 'but oh how utterly unfit to die!'

'That is true,' rejoined Justin Arnold with undiminished vehemence. 'Those, if you will, are words of truth and sense: go you and preach them to the makers and executioners of English law. In the meantime I would speak privately with this gentleman.'

The reverend pastor, with a mute gesture of compassion, sorrow, and regret, was about to leave the cell, when he was stayed by the prisoner, who exclaimed, 'Now I think of it, you had better, sir, remain. The statement I am about to make cannot, for the sake of the victim's reputation, and for her friends' sake, have too many witnesses. You both remember Jane Eccles?' A broken exclamation from both of us answered him, and he quickly added—'Ah, you already guess the truth, I see. Well, I do not wonder you should start and turn pale. It *was* a cruel, shameless deed—a dastardly murder if there was ever one. In as few words as possible, so you interrupt me not, I will relate *my* share in the atrocious business.' He spoke rapidly, and once or twice during the brief recital the moistened eye and husky voice betrayed emotions which his pride would have concealed.

'Jane and I were born in Hertfordshire, within a short distance of each other. I knew her from a child. She was better off then, I worse than we subsequently became—she by her father's bankruptcy, I by my mo——, by Mrs Barton's wealthy marriage. She was about nineteen, I twenty-four, when I left the country for London. That she loved me with all the fervour of a trusting woman I well knew; and I had, too, for some time known that she must be either honourably wooed or not at all. That with me was out of the question, and, as I told you, I came about that time to London. You can, I daresay, imagine the rest. We were—I and my friends I mean—at a loss for agents to dispose of our wares, and at the same time pressed for money. I met Jane Eccles by accident. Genteel, of graceful address and winning manners, she was just fitted for our purpose. I feigned reawakened love, proffered marriage, and a home across the Atlantic, as soon as certain trifling but troublesome affairs which momently harassed me were arranged. She believed me. I got her to change a considerable number of notes under various pretexts, but that they were forged she had not and could not have the remotest suspicion. You know the catastrophe. After her apprehension I visited this prison as her brother, and buoyed her up

to the last with illusions of certain pardon and release, whatever the verdict, through the influence of my wealthy father-in-law, of our immediate union afterwards, and tranquil American home. It is needless to say more. She trusted me, and I sacrificed her—less flagrant instances of a like nature occur every day. And now, gentlemen, I would fain be alone.'

'Remorseless villain!' I could not help exclaiming under my breath as he moved away.

He turned quickly back, and looking me in the face, without the slightest anger, said, 'An execrable villain if you like—not a remorseless one! Her death alone sits near, and troubles my to all else hardened conscience. And let me tell you, reverend sir,' he continued, resuming his former bitterness as he addressed the chaplain—'let me tell you that it was not the solemn words of the judge the other day, but her pale, reproachful image, standing suddenly beside me in the dock, just as she looked when I passed my last deception on her, that caused the tremor and affright, complacently attributed by that grave functionary to his own sepulchral eloquence. After all, her death cannot be exclusively laid to my charge. Those who tried her would not believe her story, and yet it was true as death. Had they not been so confident in their own unerring wisdom, they might have doomed her to some punishment short of the scaffold, and could now have retrieved their error. But I am weary, and would, I repeat, be alone. Farewell!' He threw himself on the rude pallet, and we silently withdrew.

A paper embodying Justin Arnold's declaration was forwarded to the secretary of state, and duly acknowledged, accompanied by an official expression of mild regret that it had not been made in time to save the life of Jane Eccles. No further notice was taken of the matter, and the record of the young woman's judicial sacrifice still doubtless encumbers the archives of the Home Office, forming, with numerous others of like character, the dark, sanguine background upon which the achievements of the great and good men who have so successfully purged the old Draco code that now a faint vestige only of the old barbarism remains, stand out in bright relief and changeless lustre.

COMPETITION AND CO-OPERATION.

A LARGE portion of the public is quite unaware of the new aspect which socialistic ideas are taking in England, and of the great extent of reception which they have met with in the community. No longer left in the hands of Mr Owen, with his eternal fallacy of man being purely the creature of circumstances, these ideas are now patronised by clergymen of the Church of England, by learned professors and clever men of letters; if, on the one hand, they are still connected with the subversion of property and marriage, they are on the other invested with all the charms of a glowing philanthropy, and even identified with Christianity itself. The *Leader* (weekly newspaper) is recognised as the organ of this new form of an old idea, and we have of late seen various equally able pamphlets, and even a strikingly eloquent and original novel (*Alton Locke*), devoted to the same cause. So important is the matter become, that the *Edinburgh Review* has at length deemed it entitled to notice. The last number contains a remarkably vigorous discussion of the subject, 'in the sobered and modified form which it has now assumed.'

The position taken by the new Socialists is assumed to be this:—'Society is altogether out of joint. Its anomalies, its disfigured aspects, its glaring inequalities, the sufferings of the most numerous portion of it, are monstrous, indefensible, and yearly increasing; mere palliatives, mere slow improvements, mere gradual ameliorations, will not meet its wants; it must be *remodelled*, not merely furbished up. Political economy has hitherto had it all its own way; and the shocking condition into which it has brought us, shows that its principles must be strangely inadequate or unsound. The miseries of the great mass of the people—their inability to find work, or to obtain, in return for such work as can be performed in reasonable time and by ordinary strength, a sufficiency of the comforts and necessaries of life—may all be traced to one source—*competition* instead of combination. The antagonistic and regenerative principle which must be introduced, is *association*. Let workmen associate with one another, instead of competing with one another, and there will be work and wages enough for all. Competition is a cruel and unchristian system: association breathes the very spirit of our divine Master.'

The Review combats, we think successfully, the idea that political economy has had its own way, or any sensible influence in determining the present arrangements. Notoriously, this science is only gradually enforcing its dictates in the national councils, and much is constantly done and enacted in its despite. But this is a minor point. The question is as to competition, whatever may be its present sanctions. According to Mr Thornton Hunt, a leader in the new school—the theory of the Division of Employments is that thereby, through economy of time and exercise of skill, the amount of produce will be increased. 'But,' says he, 'what do we find to be the fact? The fact is, that the gross amount of produce is not proportionably increased; that to many of the dividers of labour it is not increased at all; and that the return of produce for labour is in no respect apportioned to exertion. I find the plain and direct ground of this in *want of concert*. It is plain that if any given number of men combine, and divide employments, they *can* make their labour much more productive, *if* there is some concert between them as to the distribution of their labour; but if there is not that concert, the chances are, that some of them will be working in duplicate—producing glut; others working at things not wanted; others doing about the right thing; and a few hitting on something very valuable. And when they come to divide their produce by the principle of trading exchange—a fair share will go to those who have done the right thing; half a share a-piece to those who have been working in duplicate; nothing to those who have worked, however honestly, yet uselessly; and an accumulation of several shares to him who has hit upon the most precious something. Precisely a description of our unorganized labour.' Mr Hunt goes on to combat the presumption that competition increases production more than co-operation would. 'In the first place,' he says, 'it is quite clear that the greatest amount of produce would be obtained by the best distribution of labour, which cannot possibly be obtained without concert; secondly, competition draws labour from the least remunerative to the most remunerative; but those which by no means "pay" best, according to the trading exchange, are among those which are most certain and profitable for society: competition, therefore, disturbs the right distribution of labour.'

What says the Review in answer? 'Stripped of needless verbiage, Mr Hunt's idea seems to be this—that labour would be both more productive and better rewarded were the number of labourers in each department exactly proportioned to the need which the world has of the produce of that department; were there just the right number of tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, graziers, and corn-growers; and were this "just right number" ascertained beforehand. We may grant him his position. But how can this vital point be ascertained beforehand? How can it be ascertained at all, except by free competition, which will soon bring us the needed knowledge, by showing us which branches of industry are most, and which least remunerative—that is, *which branches of industry*

have the fewest, and which the most labourers in proportion to the demand for their produce? If any kind of labour does not pay, this is a sign that it is not wanted, and will be abandoned; if any one pays ill, this is a proof that there are too many labourers employed in it, or, as Mr Hunt expresses it, that they are "working in duplicate." Mr Hunt would ascertain all this, not by experience, but *à priori*, "by concert." Has he ever troubled himself to consider by what machinery this preliminary concert can be managed? How the requirements of the world for this or that article can be discovered, otherwise than by making it, and seeing if the world will buy it? Would he have committees—boards of *prud'hommes*—to decide when an additional tailor, or a score of fresh bricklayers are wanted, and to forbid the existence of such till the want is clearly made manifest? No doubt some dim idea of this sort was in his mind when he penned the passage we have quoted. But all this has been tried ages since, and is even now in partial operation in many parts of the continent. This was the basis of the guilds of old. The incorporated tradesmen had a monopoly of their special branch of industry; they decided how many apprentices each man should be allowed to educate; how many masters should be admitted yearly into the confraternity: if the demand for coats, or watches, or furniture was slack, they restricted their numbers; if, on the contrary, society required these articles, or any others, in increased quantities, they, after a considerable enhancement of price, graciously permitted a moderate multiplication of the needful handicraftsmen. We presume this is the system which Mr Hunt would introduce; for between ascertaining the number of labourers required in each department by some method of this kind, or by the results of free competition, we can discern no third alternative. Is he, then, prepared to take the consequences of such a regulating power? And is he aware that the system was only enabled to work in former days, and could only work now, by such stern restrictions on marriage and multiplication as the operative classes would fiercely revolt from? And that if they would submit to such restrictions, the competition system would work at least as well as any other?

'Concert, then, as an opponent to or substitute for competition, in solving the problem of the wisest distribution of labour, is either a chimera or a tyranny. So applied, it delegates to a few men sitting in committee the decision as to the number of workmen required in each department, and the right of warning all others off the ground; while it expects from these men a wisdom and omniscience which neither individuals nor corporations could by possibility possess.'

The Review proceeds to consider those various associative concerns which we lately had under notice in this Journal. It sees in them, as we did, nothing contrary to the soundest principles of political economy. They are merely large copartnerships. They require, according to the reviewer, 'what is wanting in theoretic socialism'—a *master's hand;* and 'as long as this is allowed, submitted to, well-chosen, and well-paid—*in proportion, that is, as the existing arrangements are approximated to*—so long the institutions will do well.' We here dissent a little from the reviewer. We think there is no room to fear that a considerable share of the directing power may, in time at least, be permitted to the entire body of members. If so, it would be better for a man to make equal returns from a co-operative concern, because he will have the satisfaction of being partially a master besides, in which feeling we believe there resides a moral force of immense importance to the working-man. This, however, remains to be proved by experiment.

The reviewer then adds—'These enterprises evade the whole difficulty. How *is it* that the Sweating System, with all its alleged cruelties and oppressions, is possible? Why are the slop-sellers able to get the operatives so completely in their power—to fix their wages, and to dictate terms? Why is it that the journeymen tailors are so powerless that they must accept any wages that are offered to them? Clearly because they are more numerous than the demand requires. Does Mr Kingsley suppose that if the 23,000 tailors in London were to be suddenly reduced to 15,000—the coats and trousers required by society remaining the same—the slop-sellers could compel them to work for them if they did not wish, or to work at all, except in localities of their own choosing, and on their own terms? Does he not perceive that, in the event of such an occurrence, it would be the men and not the masters who would dictate terms? Is it not abundantly obvious that the misery and slavery of the London tailors and needlewomen arise *primarily* from the clothing needs of the metropolis being inadequate to keep so many in full and constant employment? Now, have these associations—which they are told will rescue them—the slightest tendency either to augment the demand for clothes or to diminish the numbers of the clothing artisans? If not, how can they effect any purpose except that of ameliorating the condition of the few who become members of them?

"Oh! but" (they reply) "we purpose in time to organize all the tailors in the metropolis into similar associations." Very well; follow out your process, and see where it will lead. The fact you have to meet is this: there are 23,000 tailors in existence, with full and constant work only for 15,000; as you continue your benevolent organizations, you will in the end have associated these 15,000, and secured to them a comfortable and continuous subsistence. *What will then have become of the residual* 8000? Will you cast them out to starve? Will you support them by a charitable contribution from the earnings of the employed? Do you suppose they will not compete with you, and, rather than earn nothing, work at lower wages than you assign yourselves? Do you not perceive that the utmost your organization of labour can save for distribution among the mass of artizans, is *the profits of the middlemen*, which you conceive to be so enormous—nay, only the difference between these profits and the salary you pay to your various managers and superintendents, who stand to you in the place of the middlemen? And have you taken the trouble to ask yourselves these simple questions before you announced your scheme as a great panacea—an infallible way to salvation?'

The great merit of the associations is assumed to be, that they will extinguish competition. The reviewer shows that they are competing with each other in Paris, and that the language of many of them in this country is simply that of competition. He says, 'If all the tailors in London were embodied to-morrow into a number of different associations, it is certain that these associations would compete with one another, exactly as individuals would do, because there would be too many associations (to the supposed extent of 8000 men) for the work required. "True," replies Mr Kingsley; "but our work will be incomplete till we have blended all these associations into one vast guild. Competition will then be out of the question." Yes! but it will be replaced by *monopoly;* and we all know what monopoly means—artificial prices, a restricted market, a gigantic job, a final and inevitable smash! To sum up the whole: the advocates of association as a cure for competition are caught between two horns of a dilemma, which half Mr Kingsley's sagacity, if united with a less vivid fancy and a less copious vocabulary, would, from the first, have enabled him to foresee:—in case you have many associations, you retain all the evils of competition; in case you merge them all into one, you encounter all the evils of monopoly. We defy the Socialists to escape from this dilemma except by assuming a remodelling of human nature by

divine or Christian influences; and *when this remodelling has been achieved, all systems will become indifferent, for the evils of all systems will be wiped away.*'

Mr Thornton Hunt has replied to this formidable article, but disappoints us by not giving enough of his attention to these leading arguments. The pith of what he says in answer to the passages which we have quoted lies in what follows:—'My fundamental position is this—the first thing for us to consider is the well-being, in body and feeling, of the living creatures who are born to the earth; and we must consider that substantial wellbeing in body and heart before "the advancement of the nation," which generally means the luxury and dignity of particular classes; or "the advancement of commerce," which means the multiplication of goods, many of them not at all necessary. An Englishman on his piece of land is able to provide for himself, mate, and progeny, as we see in other quarters of the globe. When his industry produces its fruits, he has a right to retain those fruits until the equivalent be rendered to him; and while artificial laws debar an Englishman from standing on his land, using his hands upon it, and grasping the fruits in his own fist, society is bound to provide him with the equivalent—the opportunity of obtaining subsistence by labour. If the effect of advancement in the condition of the nation and of commerce is to make the larger number of Englishmen less comfortable in body and mind than they would be in a ruder state of society, there are those—and I am one—who will go to the displaced Englishman, and tell him that he had better combine with the multitude of his fellows to alter that sort of advancement, and bring back things to fundamental rights. Read what Thornton has said as to the practical deterioration in the condition of the English labourer. Although it may be true that he has now a better supply of broadcloth, knives and forks, and such non-essential articles, they have very little bearing upon substantial happiness. But further, if the advancement of the nation had been guided by a more accurate and enlightened view of the laws which regulate production, and call forth the genius of the people by placing them in the best circumstances—although I am no disciple of the doctrine of "exterior circumstances," which you condemn—I contend that our advancement should have been greater, more sound, and more stable in its results. In pointing to concert in labour as the complement of the division of employments, you forget that I am pointing out a *principle*; and that in eliminating that principle, I was no more bound to describe all the institutions that might hereafter arise from it, than Adam Smith was bound, in analysing the division of employments, to describe the Factory System as it actually exists amongst us. I have contended that we must sternly avert our ideas from system-making, and bring them back to an examination of principles; and I maintain not only that the principle of concert is the true complement to a division of employments, but that it *is* already in operation unavoidably—as it dictates the agglomeration of work in a factory, the institution of commercial exchanges, or "bourses," like those which are seen in every capital; it has dictated, imperfectly enough, the construction of that railway system which is too vast to be affected in any but a very trivial degree by the ruder principle of competition. It has suggested those demands for official agricultural statistics which have been made in parliament; and it is the very principle of a sound poor-law, which *ought* to be an engine for "transferring surplus employment from one branch of industry to another."'

We have little room to discuss these great questions. We certainly see competition attended with an appalling display of high-strung selfishness, and it is impossible to look unmoved on the hordes which it is continually throwing down into ill-remunerated employments. But can we be sure that the evils are avoidable? We much fear that those who think they are, proceed upon a too favourable estimate of human nature. When we see the sanguinary scramble for existence which goes on amongst the lower animals, should we be much surprised to find that man is a competing animal also, each individual seeking for the means of gratifying his selfhood, under only those restraints which reason and custom impose? Association, we can see, is capable of being carried much farther than it has yet been carried, and with good effects; but we cannot convince ourselves that it is capable of entirely extinguishing competition, except through the exercise of a tyranny which would be the last and worst of all social evils. On the other hand, great as are the sufferings in the lowest fields of industry, they are capable of an indefinite reduction under measures of a clearly practical nature. Workingmen would be little exposed to such a dire state as that of the sweating tailors if they could maintain any degree of independence—such as intelligence, temperance, and a little hoard in the savings' bank can confer. They would in that case comprehend the nature and the proper remedies of the evils in question; they would see when it was necessary to shift their locality, or change their occupation, and they would have the means of doing so. It is wonderful what a power the working-people of this country might become, were they to take, to the extent of their ability, the same advantage as the middle classes of the ordinary recognised means of advancing themselves in the social scale. A right ambition and self-respect is one of their greatest wants. We have, however, the comfort of thinking that intelligence and the associated virtues are rapidly advancing amongst them. Here is a real, certain good. If grand social revolutions are in time to come, these minor advances will not be an obstacle in their way.

VICTIMS OF SCIENCE.

There is a proverb which says, 'Better is the enemy of well.' Perhaps we may go further, and say, that 'Well sometimes makes us regret bad.'

You would have confessed the truth of this latter axiom if you had known, as I did, an excellent young man named Horace Castillet, who had been gifted by Providence with good health, powerful intellect, an amiable disposition, and many other perfections, accompanied by one single drawback. He had a distorted spine and crooked limbs, the consciousness of which defects prevented him from rushing into the gaiety and vain dissipation which so often ensnare youth. Forsaking the flowery paths of love and pleasure, he steadily pursued the rough, up-hill road of diligent persevering study. He wrought with ardour, and already success crowned his efforts. Doubtless bitter regrets sometimes troubled his hours of solitary study, but he was amply consoled by the prospect of fortune and well-earned fame which lay before him. So he always appeared in society amiable and cheerful, enlivening the social circle with the sallies of his wit and genius. He used sometimes to say, laughing—'Fair ladies mock me, but I will take my revenge by obliging them to admire.'

One day a surgeon of high repute met Horace, and said to him—'I can repair the wrong which nature has done you: profit by the late discoveries of science, and be at the same time a great and a handsome man.' Horace consented. During some months he retired from society, and when he reappeared, his most intimate friends could scarcely recognise him. 'Yes,' said he, 'it is I myself: this tall, straight, well-made man is your friend Horace Castillet. Behold the miracle which science has wrought! This metamorphosis has cost me cruel suffering. For months I lay stretched

on a species of rack, and endured the tortures of a prisoner in the Inquisition. But I bore them all, and here I am, a new creature. Now, gay comrades, lead me whither you will; let me taste the pleasures of the world without any longer having to fear its raillery.'

If the name of Horace Castillet is unspoken among those of great men, if it is now sunk in oblivion, shall we not blame for this the science which he so much lauded? Deeply did the ardent young man drink of this world's poisoned springs. Farewell to study, fame, and glory! Æsop perhaps might never have composed his Fables had orthopedia been invented in his time. Horace Castillet lost not only his talents, but a large legacy destined for him by an uncle, in order to make him amends for his natural defects. His uncle seeing him no longer deformed in body and upright in mind, chose another heir. After having spent the best years of his life in idleness and dissipation, Horace is now poor, hopeless, and miserable. He said lately to one of his few remaining friends—'I was ignorant of the treasure I possessed. I have acted like the traveller who should throw away his property in order to walk more lightly across a plain!'

The surgeon had another deformed patient, a very clever-working mechanic, whose talents made him rich and happy. When he was perfectly cured, and about to return to his workshop, the conscription seized him, finding him fit to serve the state. He was sent to Africa, and perished there in battle.

A gentleman who had the reputation of being an original thinker, could not speak without a painful stutter; a skilful operator restored to him the free use of his tongue, and the world, to its astonishment, discovered that he was little better than a fool. Hesitation had given a sort of originality to his discourse. He had time to reflect before he spoke. Stopping short in the middle of a sentence had occasionally a happy effect, and a half-spoken word seemed to imply far more than it expressed. But when the flow of his language was no longer restrained, he began to listen to his own commonplace declamation with a complacency which assuredly was not shared by his auditors.

One fine day a poor blind man was seated on the Pont-Royal in Paris, waiting for alms. The passers-by were bestowing their money liberally, when a handsome carriage stopped near the mendicant, and a celebrated oculist stepped out. He went up to the blind man, examined his eyeballs, and said—'Come with me; I will restore your sight.' The beggar obeyed; the operation was successful; and the journals of the day were filled with praises of the doctor's skill and philanthropy. The ex-blind man subsisted for some time on a small sum of money which his benefactor had given him; and when it was spent, he returned to his former post on the Pont-Royal. Scarcely, however, had he resumed his usual appeal, when a policeman laid his hand on him, and ordered him to desist, on pain of being taken up.

'You mistake,' said the mendicant, producing a paper; 'here is my legal license to beg, granted by the magistrates.'

'Stuff!' cried the official; 'this license is for a *blind* man, and you seem to enjoy excellent sight.' Our hero, in despair, ran to the oculist's house, intending to seek compensation for the doubtful benefit conferred on him; but the man of science had gone on a tour through Germany, and the aggrieved patient found himself compelled to adopt the hard alternative of *working* for his support, and abandoning the easy life of a professed beggar.

Some years since there appeared on the boards of a Parisian theatre an excellent and much-applauded comic actor named Samuel. Like many a wiser man before him, he fell deeply in love with a beautiful girl, and wrote to offer her his hand, heart, and his yearly salary of 8000 francs. A flat refusal was returned. Poor Samuel rivalled his comrade, the head tragedian of the company, in his dolorous expressions of despair; but when, after a time, his excitement cooled down, he despatched a friend, a trusty envoy, with a commission to try and soften the hard-hearted beauty. Alas, it was in vain!

'She does not like you,' said the candid ambassador: 'she says you are ugly; that your eyes frighten her; and, besides, she is about to be married to a young man whom she loves.'

Fresh exclamations of despair from Samuel.

'Come,' said his friend, after musing for a while, 'if this marriage be, as I suspect, all a sham, you may have her yet.'

'Explain yourself?'

'You know that, not to mince the matter, you have a frightful squint?'

'I know it.'

'Science will remove that defect by an easy and almost painless operation.' No sooner said than done. Samuel underwent the operation for strabismus, and it succeeded perfectly. His eyes were now straight and handsome; but the marriage, after all, was no sham—the lady became another's, and poor Samuel was forced to seek for consolation in the exercise of his profession. He was to appear in his best character: the curtain rose, and loud hissing saluted him.

'Samuel!' 'Where is Samuel?' 'We want Samuel!' was vociferated by pit and gallery.

When silence was partly restored, the actor advanced to the footlights and said—'Here I am, gentlemen: I am Samuel!'

'Out with the impostor!' was the cry, and such a tumult arose, that the unlucky actor was forced to fly from the stage. He had lost the grotesque expression, the comic mask, which used to set the house in a roar: he could no longer appear in his favourite characters. The operation for strabismus had changed his destiny: he was unfitted for tragedy, and was forced, after a time, to take the most insignificant parts, which barely afforded him a scanty subsistence. 'Let *well* alone' is a wise admonition: 'Let *bad* alone' may sometimes be a wiser.*

A TWELVEMONTH IN CALCUTTA.

LODGINGS—MOSQUITO STRATAGEM—FLOATING HORRORS OF THE GANGES—DOMESTICS AND DOMESTIC MATTERS—BOTANIC GARDENS.

November 7th.—The gentlemen are all playing cricket just now. There is a regular cricket-club, and several good players. And dinners and evening parties are going forward again with renewed vigour. Either at home or abroad there is company for ever, and generally the parties are very pleasant, owing to almost everybody being so well acquainted. One would hardly think such a game as cricket suited to this latitude, but it seems to be always in fashion here during the cold weather, which, by the way, is much of the temperature of our summers; and nobody ever complains of any disagreeable effects from such very active exercise.

13*th.*—All the guns of the fort are firing the usual salute on the arrival of a new great man, landing at this moment amid a crowd of gazers, who will accompany him to be sworn into his office—a ceremony never one moment delayed, salary commencing from that point of time. The hotels being full, this burra sahib has to take a lodging! Fancy an old Indian reading this—Lodgings to let—in Calcutta! And very good ones too; furnished lodgings, or board and lodging, here, where some few years ago there was not even a hotel. Times are much changed since those palmy

* This article is altered and adapted from the French of Eugene Guinot.

days of Indian allowances, when, live as one would, fortunes still accumulated. Now it is not always easy to get along smoothly. The hospitable door has therefore to be sought after: it does not stand open in the sight of all.

14*th*.—The mosquitoes have begun to bite again, a sure accompaniment of the temperate weather. They are not so annoying as they were last year, and as their habit is to luxuriate upon the new arrivals, we hope that by and by they will take very little notice of us. We find laudanum allay the irritation better than any other remedy we have tried; also I have made myself a muslin bag, into which I put my feet. It is kept wide at the bottom by a frame of bamboo slipt into it, and sewed firmly to the muslin. The upper or loose end of the bag has a string run through the hem, and this I draw close round my knees. I thus sit most comfortably at any occupation, for the feet and ankles are what these torments principally aim at; and for the protection of the rest of my person, since I left off the punkah, I keep a feather fan on the table beside me, which I wave occasionally. In this guise I am writing now, free from any annoyance.

15*th*.—A great deal of canvassing is going on about the secretaryship to the Asiatic Society—an institution said to have done much in the cause of science of late, a spirit of investigation having been roused in many departments. We can suppose mental occupations more suited to warm climates than active exercises, and yet it is not so. The mind becomes very easily fatigued within the tropics if the physical powers be not constantly exerted, and the body suffers accordingly, and reacts upon the brain; also a good deal of nourishment is necessary to preserve both in health. At first I thought the quantity people ate here quite disproportioned to the exercise they were able to take, for I did not make due allowance for the waste, which is very great. Pulse and fruit may suit the Brahmin race, but undoubtedly our constitutions require meat, bread, beer, and wine. A series of entertainments have of course begun to the new man—dinners principally—there being no lady with him. A very good season for collecting crowds, as it really is very chilly.

18*th*.—I don't like the Course by the river-side at this season—I received such a shock there this morning with a sight which is too common on the Ganges and all its branches, though I had been lucky enough not to meet with it before. I did not see it from the Course exactly, but I shall always fancy I can, because the river flows so near it. Mr Black's sick partner has determined on going home; and before quite deciding in which ship to take his passage, he wished his wife to look at the cabins. She asked me, as the idlest of her acquaintance I suppose, to go with her. In rowing from the ghaut to the vessel, our boat passed close to the naked dead body of a man, which, having struck against some object in the bed of the stream, had been raised into a sitting position, the head bending forward with only the legs under the water, upon which the chest reclined. Numbers must have passed and repassed this fearful spectacle, yet no one would touch it even with the point of a bamboo. Our countrymen who live at Garden Reach pay a man to be on the look-out for these frightful appearances, and sink them out of sight. Surely the authorities might do so likewise: it would be no great interference with national superstitions; and when these national superstitions shock decency, why not stop them as we do suttees? It is only among the poorer classes that this offensive custom prevails. The rich Hindoos burn their dead when death takes place among them at any distance from the sacred river: it therefore could not be impossible to interfere with a practice so revolting to the feelings of a large class of European inhabitants.

It is rather strange that in no case of demise among this varied and very numerous population is there any notice taken of a death—of how, or where, or when a human being dies—no inquiry is ever made upon the subject; nor, however suddenly an individual may disappear, does any curiosity seem to be excited as to the cause of death, or the rank the death occurs in, or of the number perishing by pestilence—as if it were of no consequence what diseases or what crimes existed.

22*d*.—We are all busy helping the preparations for the voyage of our friends. With four children, and a perhaps five months' voyage, a large stock of linen is requisite; and Mary is no great manager, otherwise she might have been getting forward all this time, for it has of late been plain to everybody that the change was imperative. I believe she would not allow herself to think so. We are therefore in rather a bustle, these ayahs and dirjies are so very slow. Mrs Freeman—who, by the by, has heard no more of her mate—has undertaken the nursery wardrobes, and we are all content to work under her. She is very methodical, and very managing too, cutting down old dresses into neat frocks, and arranging the trays in the large trunks, so as to have everything at hand week by week as she will require them. Her character is a good answer to the cavillers about race. She is but one remove from a Hindoo, and was five years old before her soldier-father took her to England. She hardly feels the heat, thanks to her half-Indian constitution; while she has been educated out of the indolent ways of her mother's land.

24*th*.—By diligent attention to the moonshie, I have mastered so much of the easy language in general use here, as to give every necessary order, indeed to transact all ordinary business; for he has given me hints for these purposes fully as valuable as the words required. The first thing to do in all cases is to attract the attention of these idle or indifferent creatures, by calling out pretty sharply to the one addressed, 'Attend!'—after that the order is better comprehended. The servants, in their eagerness when first roused, are a little apt to run on a little too quickly, and so do something unnecessary or even inconvenient—at anyrate to propose to do it. They must be stopped with a short 'Listen!' which always recalls them to their simple duty of obedience. My usual drive now is to Mary's house, soon to be mine, for we have settled to take it. A little addition to what we at present pay for the chambers alone secures the house and the chambers within it; and the furniture is no very deadly affair here, and will always sell again for very little less than it cost. The greatest confusion at present reigns in that once pleasant abode, in spite of the care of Mrs Freeman, who has consented, very wisely, to accompany the party home. Mary has determined against encumbering herself with those bales of embroidery, muslins, cachemires, ivory, &c. in which such sums are so constantly invested by people returning from India. She merely takes what she has by her, and she confines her purchases to such additions to her stock as the long voyage renders indispensable. The real fact is, that all the artistic productions of India can be bought as cheap in London as here; shawls certainly cheaper; the only exception may be jewels, and gold and silver manufactures, which are contraband, not even allowed to go through the customhouse at all, duty or no duty: they are broken upon the spot, and can only enter the country smuggled. People put treasures of this kind in their pockets, for I believe the person is never searched. Edward is very anxious to send home treasures of another kind with her sick husband and Mary. He is trying to prevail on Mr Black and Helen to part with their little boys—their little delicate boys—whose voyage home under such affectionate care, and with their cousins and Freeman, would be a very happy one—a more comfortable arrangement for the

parents than any other likely to cast up. Poor Helen! she grows deadly pale whenever the subject is mentioned. But Mr Black seems to approve of the plan: we therefore suppose it will be carried out. These dreadful family separations are the drawbacks to Indian life, which can otherwise be made very enjoyable.

26th.—The first object that met my eyes to-day was a piece of long cloth, the next was two pieces of muslin, presents from a successful client. The third sight was two state howdahs, which we went to Stewart the coachmaker's to admire. They are intended for the backs of two elephants, going as a present to the pacha of Egypt. Mr Stewart's premises are very fine, and his factory carried on apparently in the best manner. The howdahs are really handsome, very tastefully got up, but with a square flat roof, supported by light pillars. I should myself have preferred them more in the Indian fashion; but probably English style may be preferred at Grand Cairo. The elephants are to be shipped in a day or two, and we have gladly accepted an invitation to view what is represented as a curious process.

29th.—The elephants' departure still uncertain, so, 'to beguile the time,' we went yesterday to visit the Botanic Gardens, which I have long had a desire to see. We drove to the ghaut, nearly opposite the Bishop's College, where we took boat and crossed over, as we intended examining that building in the first instance. It is handsome outside, and has a fine library and a pretty chapel; but we did not see it to advantage, as it happens to be under repair. From this place it is a pleasant walk to the gardens, under shade the whole way along the bank of the river. Dr Wallick, who had sent his own boat for us, now ordered his tonjon to follow our small party; and once or twice I—the only lady—was glad to take advantage of it, as this was a very long walk for an Indian. The tonjon is a sort of chair—a seat set on two poles—and carried by two men palkee fashion. I wonder these Botanic Gardens are not more resorted to? At this time of year a saunter here is charming, a delightful change from that eternal Course; and the crossing is so easy, so quick an operation, as to be more an agreeable variety than an impediment. The shortness of the evenings must be the real drawback, darkness falling down so suddenly, that the return might be inconvenient. People do occasionally make pic-nic parties here in the cool weather. Of course we could not see the whole, nor even the half of these extensive grounds on this our first visit: they extend for three miles down the river: I am not certain of their average breadth. As much variety as was possible to effect on such a dead level has been contrived, the wooding being admirably managed to hide or to increase the beauty of the Hoogly.

We entered through a plantation of young teak, made for scientific purposes merely, as it is not a tree suited to the soil or climate, or ever supposed to reach its proper perfection on this side of India. We next came upon some fine lissoos—a graceful tree, and very thriving. Beyond was a plot of sugar-canes; and then we approached Dr Wallick's house, surrounded by shrubbery, and looking on the river. Very few flowers will flourish hereabouts; but to make amends, the flowering shrubs are of exceeding beauty, and in great profusion and variety. We went on to the nursery to see, amongst other things, several boxes of plants packed ready for England, going home in the same ship with the sick partner. They are very ingeniously shaped like an ordinary cottage, with panes of glass in the roof and sides. They water the plants well when they set them in the earth within; and I suppose a sufficient quantity of air is contained, for no care is taken of them during the voyage, and they generally arrive in good preservation. A mahogany-tree was pointed out to me as a fine specimen—so fine, as shows this kind of foreign timber might be naturalised with advantage. There was a great variety of palm-trees, some of them of uncommon beauty, amongst them that particular species from whose pith sago is manufactured. An immense plantain we also observed, four times the ordinary size; a splendid cluster of bamboos; and a banyan, the glory of the gardens. We compared this wonderful specimen with the wild clump we had wandered under at Serampore, flourishing there in all the luxuriant carelessness of nature. Here art had much assisted to produce this finer tree; it had had early cultivation, every branch watched, cherished, guarded. It is a curious, nay, a wondrous thing, to walk among these living pillars, each standing clear apart, supporting at their several distances the massive and wide-spreading branches, from which they originally depended, and then to look up and see the enormous growth overhead. A very singular creeping plant next attracted us, hardly rising above six inches from its root, in quest of something to hang itself on, the dry-looking horizontal stretching stem marked in knots and knobs, giving it the appearance of a chain. The one we were examining had fastened itself on a cotton-tree, round which it was twisted most strangely. Another tree had its roots mostly all above ground, like bunches of dahlia roots. One would suppose that such slight hold of the earth as such sort of fibres must have, would give the tree little chance against a north-wester; but we found that they are seldom or never blown down. Some kinds of large shrubs had their bark studded with strong thorns, sharp as the points on old armour. It both surprised and grieved me to find how very little we all generally comprehend of the productions of beautiful nature—nature so various and so prodigal, and of such consequence to us to be understood. I don't mean the scientific histories and arrangements of the learned, and all the technicalities of the trade of knowledge in its thousand departments; I only mean the contemplation of the wonders by which we are surrounded, the opening of our eyes to see, and of our ears to hear, and of our tongues to tell of the subjects of interest we unthinkingly live amongst, to which the attention of the young is too seldom directed, and the over-labouring lives of the more advanced in age prevents their turning their minds. A fan-shaped plant of some size attracted me, composed of long reedy leaves all diverging from a centre. These leaves are the treasures of the desert, for they contain pure water, elaborated within the plant itself, not drawn from any reservoir for preserving the dew or rain. Break a puncture of one of these long leaves, and the pure element readily flows. It has been often analysed, and not a particle of vegetable or any other matter has ever been found in it. Then we came to the pitcher-plant, named from the form of its flower, which has a real lid opening to receive all moisture, and closing on the precious drops; then to a shrub with curious leaves all doubled up, sewn together actually, with threads drawn from a neighbouring cotton bush by the long bill of a little bird, which thus forms its pretty nest. I could go on for an hour describing all we saw. This was a morning of thorough enjoyment to both of us.

December 2.—The preparations for the voyage are rapidly advancing, and disappointments in their progress begin seriously to annoy us, for the time of departure has been fixed for to-morrow week. We are a little hurried, because poor Helen has consented to part with her children, and there is a good deal to be done for them. To retard us, we have had a Mussulman holiday, when no work could be got from that sect. A Hindoo ditto ditto. The dirjie is quite behind-hand after all sorts of promises, and the dhobee is just as bad. Mary is not nearly ready, and she has a great deal to do that no one else can do for her—bills to pay, many of them not come in; discharges to write for all the servants;

and innumerable notes of compliment to reply to—very ill-timed I think them—and the cabin to visit, and the furniture to arrange in it, and her husband really so ill, that he is a very great addition to her troubles. We are very sorry to lose them. He is a more than commonly intelligent man; and she, immethodical as she is, and therefore always in dilemmas, is very much to be liked—her quickness of observation, her kindness of heart, her easy cheerful Irish manner, make up for her indolence in business matters, and render her most agreeable as a companion.

CONDITION OF THE HUMBLEST CLASS OF LABOURERS.

As things now stand, it cannot be doubted that the daily corporeal labour which is the lot of this class of men supplies that kind of occupation which is most suited to their capacity, and which is, consequently, more productive of happiness than any other would be. I even question if the diminution of the period of daily labour, when excessive, as in many cases it doubtless is, would add to their happiness. Unable for the most part to read books of instruction or amusement with understanding or profit; ignorant of all the sciences even in their very rudiments; uninstructed in any art that has relation to the higher faculties; with the imagination, and the fancy, and all the other ministers of taste unawakened from their sleep; unacquainted even with most of the little arts having relation to their own domestic state; nay, unskilled in the very games which might innocently fill up a vacant hour—what could they do with more leisure? Alas, I fear we have an answer in what we all see around us in the proceedings which too generally characterise the haunts most frequented by them during the intervals of their weekly labour by day; in their evenings; and even in their Sundays and other holidays! Is such a state of things as this to last for ever? Is it even to last long? I believe not: certainly not long, according to the measure by which we mete out time in relation to momentous changes in man's condition on earth: once fairly assailed, it must gradually vanish before that *progress* which has never yet ceased, in some degree or other, to animate and advance the race, and which, like material bodies in motion, will gain force as it proceeds. When this period arrives, *labour* will then take its just place and degree among the acknowledged elements of happiness; and the business of the world will be carried on, even in its lowest forms, not by unthinking, unreasoning, unenjoying machines in human form, but by men worthy of the name, men with minds as capable of labour as their bodies, and having the means and opportunity of exercising the one as well as the other in that active, earnest, but *temperate* manner which seems to have been ordained as the best manner for man in all his relations. The means whereby this happy change is to be brought about, as far as our feeble powers can foresee, seem to lie mainly in the general cultivation of men's minds—in other words, in the imparting of knowledge to all those capable of receiving it.—*From a Lecture on Happiness in its Relations to Work and Knowledge. By John Forbes, M. D., Physician to her Majesty's Household.* London: Smith, Elder, & Co. 1850.

THE BLACK ANT OF AFRICA.

The black ant, however, is the insect most to be dreaded, not merely on account of its severe bite, but because it is so destructive to live stock as well as dead, and so difficult to get rid of, when once they have found their way into your house, or any other part of your premises. They are much larger than our full-sized emmet; have strong, large front forceps, which inflict a severe pinch; and are very powerful in their bodily actions, as well as swift in their movements. They are serviceable in one way—and that is, in clearing your premises of every species of filth and vermin, of which they will not leave a vestige. Only, when you receive a visit from them, you must look well to your poultry, goats, or anything you may have of a consumable description, and remove them to some place of security. Nor ought you to attempt to interrupt them in their march, or in anyway interfere with them, but allow them free ingress and egress, suffering them to depart when they please. For they come in such armies, that to annihilate them is out of the question, and prudence advises not to provoke them to reprisals.—*Poole's Life in Sierra Leone.*

SONG OF THE NAUTILUS.

A FAIRY I am of the boundless sea,
More blithe than my mates of the greenwood tree;
I dance on the waves to the mermaid's song,
And the breath of a zephyr bears me along.

I spread my small sail on the tropical wave,
Where the fiery sunbeams in ocean bathe;
And I moor by some isle known only to me—
An oasis green in that far lone sea.

In silence I glide in the shadowy night,
Or rest where a star makes an island of light,
Or chase the pale moonbeams that glide on the spray,
Which still, as I follow, seem further away.

No music's to me like the dash of the sea,
No harmony ever so wild and so free;
And I steer my light bark without compass or helm—
My oar for my sceptre, the main for my realm.

E. M. M.

REASONS FOR KEEPING THE TEETH CLEAN.

At a meeting of the American Academy, December 1849, a paper was read by Dr H. J. Bowditch, on the animal and vegetable parasites infesting the teeth, with the effects of different agents in causing their removal and destruction. Microscopical examinations had been made of the matter deposited on the teeth and gums of more than forty individuals, selected from all classes of society, in every variety of bodily condition; and in nearly every case animal and vegetable parasites in great numbers had been discovered. Of the animal parasites there were three or four species, and of the vegetable one or two. In fact the only persons whose mouths were found to be completely free from them cleansed their teeth four times daily, using soap once. One or two of these individuals also passed a thread between the teeth to cleanse them more effectually. In all cases the number of the parasites was greater in proportion to the neglect of cleanliness. The effect of the application of various agents was also noticed. Tobacco juice and smoke did not impair their vitality in the least. The same was also true of the chlorine tooth-wash, of pulverised bark, of soda, ammonia, and various other popular detergents. The application of soap, however, appeared to destroy them instantly. We may hence infer that this is the best and most proper specific for cleansing the teeth. In all cases where it has been tried, it receives unqualified commendation. It may also be proper to add, that none but the purest white soap, free from all discolorations, should be used.—*American Annual of Scientific Discovery.*

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